

Public Affairs Office Weekly Report

June 24, 2020

Hot Issues:

ORD Disinfectant Research with MTA:

As early as this week, HQ ORD expects to issue a news release about research efforts to assess whether certain disinfectants are long-lasting and effective against COVID-19 on hard surfaces in transit systems. This is expected to generate press interest, and potentially interest from elected officials.

News Releases:

June 17: [EPA Administrator Wheeler Appoints New Members to the Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee](#)

June 18: [EPA Completes Steps to Transfer Access Road to Warren and Washington Counties Industrial Development Agency to Support Community Redevelopment](#)

June 23: [EPA Awards New York \\$220 Million for Water Infrastructure Improvements](#)

June 23: [EPA Awards New Jersey \\$84 Million for Water Infrastructure Improvements](#)

Upcoming News Releases:

- Proposed Plan for Unimatic Superfund Site OU2
- Proposed Plan for Riverside Park Superfund Site
- Arsenic Mine Superfund Site Record of Decision

Upcoming Community Meetings:

- Newtown Creek CAG meeting, July 15
- Diamond Alkali/Passaic River CAG meeting, July 9
- Hoosick Falls CPWG, July 22
- Riverside Industrial Virtual Public Meeting, July TBD
- Unimatic Virtual Public Meeting, July TBD

Past Week:

Newtown Creek

On June 10, EPA participated in the virtual Newtown Creek CAG meeting. EPA briefed the CAG on the status of OU1, OU2 and OU3. Mike Mintzer, the site attorney for Newtown Creek gave a presentation on *de minimis* settlements. A *de minimis* settlement, is a settlement between EPA and those parties who are responsible for a minimal contribution, in amount and toxicity, of the hazardous substances at a Superfund site, or who bought the site without knowledge of the contamination and did not cause or contribute to the contamination. Business representatives in the CAG are concerned about the impact of *de minimis* settlements. EPA expects that follow-up questions will be compiled and sent forward from

the CAG. Approximately 58 attendees participated virtually. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 8. (POC: Natalie Loney)

Community Involvement Mentorship Program

EPA's Superfund Community Involvement Managers formed a Mentorship Program working group for CICs to provide opportunities for seasoned CICs to share their experience with new CICs across regions. This program will also be a forum for CICs of all levels of experience to meet each other, grow and learn. Different ideas include: Junior CIC and Senior CIC mentorship across regions, CIC and CIC networking across regions, structured CIC discussion forums of specific topics for CICs to share information across regions, and more. The CI Managers will begin compiling a list of CICs and their self-identified expertise (e.g. relocation, CAG formation, TASC/TAG) and will share this list with the broader CI community. (POC: Shereen Kandil)

New Cassel/Hicksville Superfund Site

On June 17, EPA, HDR, and Cascade (driller) conducted a site visit related to the upcoming work for the **New Cassel/Hicksville Superfund Site**, which was approved by the Town of Hempstead Department of Highways in May 2020. EPA met with two of the closest residents to the planned boring location; one of the residents objected to the planned construction work and asked EPA to move the boring location. On June 23, PAO reached out to the Hempstead Town Clerk to inform them of the residents concern and communicate EPA's plan to start site construction on June 24 during business hours. (POC: Donette Samuel)

Onondaga Lake

On June 23, EPA participated in the Onondaga Lake Community Participation Working Group (CPWG) virtual meeting to discuss FYR process for Lake Bottom subsite. New York state is the lead agency for all of the Onondaga Lake subsites, except Lower Ley Creek. Dredging of contaminated lake sediments (Lake Bottom Subsite) began in summer 2012 and was completed in November 2014. Approximately 2.2 million cubic yards of contaminated sediment was removed from the lake bottom and three shoreline areas. The dredging and related capping and habitat restoration work were performed by Honeywell International with oversight by the NYSDEC, the EPA, and the New York State Department of Health. Capping, which included the placement of more than 3 million cubic yards of material consisting primarily of sand, activated carbon, siderite, and stone, was completed in December 2016. Habitat restoration activities, including improving wetlands and planting native plants, shrubs, and trees in shoreline areas, were completed in late 2017. (POC: Larisa Romanowski)

Niagara Falls Blvd Removal Site

EPA remobilized to the Niagara Falls Blvd removal site in Niagara Falls, NY this week to complete a multifaceted three-year cleanup involving the removal of fill material (low-level radioactive slag) from beneath the parking lots of two adjoining businesses. Activities will include the application of a topcoat of asphalt throughout the parking lots in addition to backfilling and grading of the staging areas behind the businesses. The work will be completed by the end of summer. (POC Mike Basile)

Superfund Research Initiative-University of Rochester

Assisted an Associate Professor at the University of Rochester in the Department of Environmental Medicine, Matthew Rand who is assembling a team of researchers to conduct a Superfund Research Project of Western and Central NY Superfund sites, the type of hazardous waste found at these sites and their possible human health and development consequences. Reached out to our Region 2 risk assessors and have instituted a dialogue with the professor in order to assist him with background information about our activities in the region. (POC Mike Basile)

Grasse River

In-river work is currently underway. On June 22, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe led a Seed Song and Tobacco Burning ceremony on the banks of the lower Grasse River to celebrate the in-water plantings of submerged aquatic vegetation in near shore areas that were cleaned and capped in 2019. Traditional Ecological Knowledge is an important aspect of restoration of habitats in the Grasse River cleanup. In 2013, EPA selected a cleanup plan for the lower Grasse River that called for capping of 284 acres of river bottom in the main channel, removal of approximately 109,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment from near-shore areas, and backfilling of dredged areas with clean material. The dredging and backfilling of near-shore areas required under EPA's original plan were completed in 2019. In April 2020, EPA modified the plan through an Explanation of Significant Differences. The modification calls for removal of an additional 90,000 cubic yards of sediment from an area of the river near Snug Harbor, instead of capping. The dredging work began in late May and is currently planned to be completed in 2020. Capping and habitat reconstruction work will continue through next year. All in-river work is anticipated to be completed by 2022. (POC: Larisa Romanowski)

Upcoming:

Hoosick Falls CPWG (NYSDEC webinar)

Due to a conflict with the local high school graduation, the CPWG facilitators have cancelled the June 24 meeting. The next meeting will be held July 22. EPA had previously received a written (email) request for EPA participation in the a CPWG meeting to discuss the following national policy issues 1) EPA final rule incorporating 172 PFAS to the Toxic Release Inventory by the National Defense Authorization Act, 2) Launch of PFAS Innovative Treatment Team (PITT) and what it might mean for Hoosick residents. Staff from ORD and OCSPP were confirmed to participate, and will join for the July meeting. (POC: Larisa Romanowski)

Unimatic

On June 17, members of PAO and SEMD had an internal meeting to determine PRAP release date, public comment period, and public meeting details for the Unimatic Superfund site. The PRAP release date will be July 6 and public comment period will be July 6 – August 4. The public meeting will happen virtually

via Skype, with the possibility of a small in-person gathering dependent on COVID-19 guidelines. (POC: Donette Samuel)

Wolff-Alport Superfund Site: Relocation of residents/tenants

On June 22, SEMD and PAO staff had a call with the USACE to discuss timelines for tenant and business relocations at the site. The interagency agreement to perform relocations and building demolition is expected to be completed by the end of the month with funding obligated in August. EPA will announce via community update fact sheet and press release the availability of funds in mid-August, and will reach out to impacted residents and business in August and September to provide assistance with relocation applications and conduct on-property inspections. It is estimated that tenant relocations will be complete in June 2021 and commercial relocations will be complete in December 2021. EPA and USACE will continue to work closely on the relocation efforts including preparing interagency agreements and contacting impacted residents and businesses in the months to come. (POC: Donette Samuel/Pat Seppi)

Route 203 site

Sediment and soil sampling began June 22 and is anticipated to last 2 to 3 weeks. GE is conducting sampling to delineate the nature and extent of contamination at the Route 203 site in the Town of Nassau, New York under a legal agreement with EPA. It consists of soil, sediment and groundwater sampling at 5225-5139 Route 203 (the property) and two adjacent properties, including an assessment of potential off-property transport mechanisms such as surface and groundwater flow. The agreement also calls for investigating an underground storage tank for hazardous substances, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The agreement includes additional soil sampling at two neighboring properties. EPA is overseeing the investigation field work, which began in March 2020 and will continue through summer 2020. A summary report of the investigation results is scheduled to be submitted to EPA in late 2020. The investigation results will be used to determine the scope of any additional investigation and/or cleanup activities at the site. (POC: Larisa Romanowski)

Onondaga Lake (Lower Ley Creek subsite)

EPA is working on developing a communications strategy for the Lower Ley Creek subsite and Ley Creek Deferred Media portion of the General Motors – Inland Fisher Guide subsite of the Onondaga Lake Superfund site to develop systematic communications with local residential, commercial, and industrial entities, as well as elected officials, through consistent engagement to support EPA's design and remedial action activities. (POC: Larisa Romanowski)

Columbia Smelting/Red Hook Park

EPA will participate in a virtual meeting with local Red Hook community groups and NYC Parks on June 25. The focus of the meeting is on the status of work at Red Hook Park ball fields 5 – 9. Other topics of discussion include CAG formation, community engagement and availability of site related information in other languages and opportunities for further engagement. (POC: Natalie Loney)

Regional Administrator's Pending Action Items:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date Sent to RA's Office</u>	<u>Required By/Due Date</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Call Congressman Kim re: Mr. Slappey	3/16/2020 and 4/20		Talking Points including COVID language provided via email
Kiryas Joel – RA to share letter sent to NYSDEC with Orange County attorney, Langdon Chapman	3/9/2020		Mary shared WD draft
Email to Suffolk County Legislature's Office for Rudy O'Neal to send re: Freshwater Streambed Remediation Grant	6/22	ASAP	Sabina shared draft email with RA
Cornell Dubilier Community Update Fact Sheet	6/22	August 2020	Shereen shared factsheet with RA
Email to Mary Cruz of Rep. Norcross staff re: Matteo Superfund Site for Carsen to send	6/22	ASAP	Sabina shared draft email with RA
Email to Congressman Norcross re: Sherwin Williams/Kirkwood Lakes	6/23		Sabina shared updated draft email with RA